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But when the decision is announced, it is done so in a manner that indicates unanimity among the members. Besides attempting arbitration and mediation, the village council also administers punishment when a person's guilt is proved. The nature of punishment itself differs in different categories of cases, also on the basis of persons involved in the dispute. It ranges from a simple warning to a complete social boycott; the intermediate stages being stern admonition, firm demand for apology, compensation to the aggrieved, and fining.

Absence of internal unity within the council has undermined its authority considerably. The fact that some of its members allow and encourage their protégés to defy—fully or partially—its decisions, contributes further to its growing weakness. Dissatisfied with its judgement one can always take the case to a regular court of law where the decision of the council may be reversed.

With these preliminary observations we can now proceed to examine a few illustrative cases which represent typical situations met with in the life of the community:

(1) V. R. R. and his brother B. live together. Their parents are dead, and being minor B. lives with his elder brother. V. R. R. has had elementary education. Being married into a respectable lower middle-class family in the city, and himself with some experience of urban life, V. R. R. regards himself as the leader of a band of city-influenced youth. As most of his time is spent in loafing, planning mischief, gambling, drinking and instigating people to quarrel, he cannot devote much time to the land, and consequently the financial position of the family is not satisfactory. V. R. R. adds to his income by extorting money from the villagers by offering his advice, help and support—often for unjust causes—but this money is spent almost wholly on himself. B. is now an adolescent, and is fast approaching a marriageable age. Noticing his elder brother's indifference towards him, B. approached some of the elders of his caste. His main complaints were: (*a*) V. R. R. does not spend his (B.'s) share of the land and its produce on him. (*b*) Nothing is being saved for his marriage. One day V. R. R. lost his temper over some trifling issue and scolded his younger brother. B. ran to E. D. R.—an influential man in the village, and the hereditary leader of his caste. Fearing that B. might be beaten by his elder brother, E. D. R. accompanied him to his house and asked V. R. R. to come out of the house and listen to

627 him. Partly because of anger, and partly under the intoxication
691 of his power and influence as the leader of a youth gang, he curtly
578 remarked to E. D. R., 'Have you nothing else to do? What brings you here? Is it because of jealousy that you cannot see our welfare and prosperity and you are instigating my brother to separate from me?' This was too much even for the sedate, cool and level-headed E. D. R., who enjoys great reputation in the village for his sobriety. He lost his temper and said, 'You bastard, you seem to have developed great notions about yourself. After spending a few months in the city—and with the support of that band of rascals—you think that you can defy the authority of village elders. I shall show you what it means to be impertinent to me.' V. R. R. was still defiant, but less impolite. E. D. R. said, 'If you have the cheek to answer me back I shall make life impossible for you in the village. You have a long tongue, but if you wag it against us we shall pull it.' At this stage V. P. R.—a rival of E. D. R., who had also been approached by B. on an earlier occasion—entered the scene. But now he was on the side of E. D. R. and joined him in scolding the unrepentant V. R. R. Within a short time a small crowd gathered at the spot. Some other elders persuaded V. R. R. to apologize to the elders whom he had offended. This he did rather reluctantly. E. D. R., V. P. R. and the other elders assembled there decided that V. R. R. should give more attention to his agriculture, save at least two hundred rupees every year for the expenses of his younger brother's wedding; and after his marriage at the end of three years give him his share of land and cattle. V. R. R. agreed to do this and the crowd dispersed.

691 (2) E. R. is a middle-aged woman, and is counted among the
578 colourful personalities of the village. In her day she was regarded as a local beauty and was known for a degree of laxity in morals. Now she has a sort of romantic attachment with C. M.—a local Muslim small-trader. Her husband is meek and docile; and her children ignore this affair. This particular case refers to her quarrel with her son Y., who not only abused her but added to the gravity of the offence by striking her in public. Outwardly the quarrel appeared to be an ordinary, everyday affair; but careful investigation revealed to us that the roots of the trouble lay somewhere else. The fact of the matter was that E. R. had got her son Y. married to a rather young and immature girl who happened to be her friend's daughter. Y. at this time was a grown-

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up man; but his child bride was unable to take her place as his wife for some three years more. To keep her son away from eloping with a young woman, E. R. not only tolerated but encouraged—some people say she actually brought it about—Y.'s liaison with a woman of the same caste living in the neighbourhood. For three or four years everything went on well and the relations between the mother and child were most cordial. Trouble started when Y.'s wife came to live with them. E. R. had expected that her son's amours with the other woman would end shortly. In this she was wrong. The young wife failed to win the affection of her husband, who remained deeply attached to his former mistress. E. R. could not tolerate this. She tried different methods to dissuade her son, and with every failure her relations with him were more embittered. Quarrels between them became frequent. Tired of the incessant flow of criticism and bitter remarks from her, one day Y. struck her—with fists first and later with a stick. He also perhaps pulled her hair. All this happened so suddenly, and E. R.'s husband was at the time so overcome that he found himself helpless and could not intervene in the matter. Infuriated by this E. R. ran into the street and started wailing and cursing loudly. Very soon this attracted a large crowd. Her husband tried to pacify her, but E. R. would not let him come near her. She said to him, 'You claim to be a man! Do you? You could see your son beating me in your very presence and did not lift even your little finger. For me you are dead. Go, go away—for me you are dead. Did you hear that?' Saying this she started breaking her glass bangles. This was quite serious for a Hindu woman breaks her bangles only when she is widowed. The crowd tried to pacify her. Sympathizers made efforts to find out what the matter was. For over an hour E. R. continued cursing her son and husband, spitting 'at their name' and throwing dust, signifying their burial. Then she gave a detailed and rather exaggerated account of the happenings of that evening. Three elders who were present at the spot immediately summoned the son and asked him to touch the feet of his mother and apologize to her. This he did readily, although with a sullen face. But E. R. reacted with another spurt of abuse and foul language. After a while people took them home. The gravity of the matter demanded its consideration by the full village council. Once again the son had to apologize to the mother, and in addition had to pay a small fine for his unbecoming behaviour.

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changed their attitude. One of their spokesmen said, 'The deceased was our seed; and not an untouchable. We may not have riches, but we shall perform his last rites.' They sent for another band, and the last rites were performed in a memorable style. K.'s son felt offended and kept himself away from the ceremonies.

(4) Robust and sturdy C. R. has several remarkable traits. Because of his personality and a rather impressive way of speaking he has considerable influence over his community and is looked upon as its leader. He is an untouchable. Some of his acts now and then disgrace his family, and bring about a temporary eclipse of his reputation. Several times he was accused of petty thefts, and once or twice fined by the village council. But when he stole a blanket and some brassware from his employer, and ran away with the wife of a neighbour, the matter was viewed very seriously. People from the village had seen him at a nearby railway station with all the three stolen things—blanket, brassware and the neighbour's wife. The theft was reported to the village council; and after some preliminary consideration the local caste group referred the elopement also to it. In the meantime news was received that C. R. was working in a sugar factory, but was anxious to return to the village. The village council came to the decision that C. R. should compensate his employer to the full value of the articles stolen, return the woman to her husband with a certain sum of money by way of compensation, and pay a fine to the council for the two offences. C. R. returned to the village, accepted the verdict of the council, but asked for a reduction in the amount of the fine. This request was granted.

(5) R. was a widow, and after the death of her husband had returned to Shamirpet to live with her mother. She was still young. In a few days she became the mistress of M. who belonged to her caste. They never lived openly as man and wife, but their relationship was well known. M. bought several expensive presents for her, and these included a silver necklace and bracelets. After about three years R. fell in love with an outsider who agreed to take her as his wife. M. did not object to this arrangement, but he insisted on having his presents back. R. was not prepared to part with them. One day when she was passing along the street in front of M.'s house, he ran towards her and started snatching the ornaments by force. R. shouted for help and people rushing to the spot separated them. The matter was reported to the headman,

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691 who convened the full council. Opinion in this case was divided, but the final verdict was that since M. had enjoyed sexual favour from the woman for three years he had no right to demand the return of the ornaments. R. married her new lover and went away to live in his village. M. was greatly dissatisfied with the decision, but there was nothing that he could do about it.

(6) D. worked in Bombay and when he returned to the village brought back with him his savings—estimated at four hundred rupees or so. He spent the money lavishly on drink and gambling. In less than a year he had squandered all his savings. Now he started ill-treating his wife. One day when the wife's father had come to take her home for a short stay, he asked her for eight annas to buy some drinks. She said that she had no money, and he beat her mercilessly. The noise attracted people to their house, and the woman's father reported the matter to the headman. The headman called some other members of the village council, and then summoned the husband and wife. He asked the wife, 'Why did you not give him the money?' The wife said, 'I did not have any with me.' She repeatedly asserted that she had no money. Thereupon her belongings were searched. This revealed that she had seven rupees. She tried to convince the council that this was her personal savings from her own earnings from the making of country cigarettes. But the Deshmukh said, 'Why did you lie before the *panchayat*? Why did you say that you had no money?' Encouraged by this turn of events in his favour the husband accused her of stealing three hundred rupees and asked her to leave him. She went away with her father to his village.

691 578 (7) L. and P. both belong to the caste of potters. Their houses stand facing each other. A tamarind tree standing midway between the two houses is a bone of contention, and over this tree there were several pitched quarrels between their families. Who has the right to its fruit? Who should sweep up the dried leaves when they fall? Who should enclose the tree within his own enclosure? Mediation of elders did not succeed in finding a satisfactory solution to the problem. The matter was reported to the village council; but there too no decision could be reached as both sides had their own supporters in nearly equal strength. Efforts at bringing about a compromise were mostly fruitless, or else agreements between the rivals were short-lived. The village council considered it time and again, but in the meantime the matter was

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reported to a government officer. For four years the matter lingered on, and the tree continued to disturb the peace of that particular living-quarter. Ultimately, at the suggestion of the government officer, the decision was given that the tree should be cut down; its wood be sold and the proceeds distributed equally between the two parties. To effect this a time-limit of a month was prescribed, after which the council was to have the liberty to dispose of the tree and thus to deprive the disputants of the proceeds.

(8) I. and S. are brothers. After their father's death they continued to live together and cultivate their land jointly for two years. Then they had some family difficulties, and had to seek the mediation of village elders. Three influential persons acceptable to both the brothers worked out the details of partition. The family land was divided into two equal parts, but one of these parts was inferior to the other. Equal division of good and inferior land between the two would have meant fragmentation of some of the tiny fields with loss to both; and so it was decided that the one who accepted the inferior land would get all the plough cattle, and the one who got the superior land would have no share in the cattle left by the father. Both the brothers were to contribute two hundred rupees each for three years for the wedding of their sister. I. chose the superior land and S. agreed to have the inferior land with the cattle. For a time the arrangement worked well. The land was still in the name of I. in the government records, because he was the elder of the two. At the time of the partition there was a tacit understanding that they would contribute equally towards the payment of land revenue. But S. had a feeling that his share should be less on account of the fact that his land was inferior. He was instigated by some people to pursue the matter further. I. would perhaps have agreed to an amicable settlement had his brother approached him; but he was annoyed to notice that he sought outside help and unjustly maligned him. Intervention of the elders failed to bring about a compromise. The village council could not come to a decision quickly, as both brothers had powerful factions supporting them. Ultimately its verdict was against S., but his advisers suggested that rather than yield to this decision he should take the matter to a civil court. At the time of our investigations the issue was still undecided and no settlement was in sight.

These examples could easily be multiplied. Failure in implementing the terms of an agreement or contract, inability to pay

691 off small debts, serious sexual intrigues, domestic quarrels assuming serious proportions, etc., keep on coming before the village council again and again. It is very rarely that it has to take the final step of ordering the social boycott of an individual. Caste *panchayats*, on the other hand, take recourse to this weapon very often when breaches of caste convention are brought to their
688 notice. Eating with a lower caste, sex intrigue outside the caste, failure in observing injunctions attached to the status of ritual impurity, and inability to perform any major ritual are all punished by ostracism. This involves denial of social equality to the ostracized family. No one will share food or drink with it. No member of such a family will be invited to attend a socio-religious ceremony, nor will anyone accept his invitation. Its status of social equality will be restored when it performs the necessary rituals for the expiation of its offence.

578 Our investigations did not reveal the existence of any serious inter-group tensions and conflicts in the community. Just before and after the Police Action there was some Hindu-Muslim tension: in the first phase Muslims terrorized the Hindus; in the second the Hindus looted property from one Muslim house and terrorized the other Muslims generally and their ringleaders particularly. Between different castes or living-quarters of the village, within living memory, there were only two major disputes. Their details are not remembered, but it is claimed that the tension was short-lived and cordiality was established very soon between the warring sections.

578 The corporate unity of the village finds its fullest expression
621 when the inhabitants come into conflict with outsiders. The village of Aliyabad shares with Shamirpet the water from the
609 tank for the purposes of irrigation. The ratio of water supplied to Shamirpet and Aliyabad has been fixed at 5:2. Over this there are always some difficulties. One night the floodgates were opened, and the water that should have irrigated Shamirpet fields was diverted to Aliyabad fields. Next morning an organized team from Shamirpet attacked Aliyabad. There were three different theories regarding what had happened the previous night. Aliyabad people said that the guards of the floodgates had asked them to take the water under the impression that it was their turn. The guards said that being threatened with violence they allowed the Aliyabad men to divert the water to their area.

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and prevent them from coming near the village, and apparently the present idea is that they will be satiated with rice and blood and not want to do any mischief. The original idea was possibly quite different; but this seems to be the intention of the ceremony in modern times. 755 776 782

On the next day, early in the morning, the clay image and the pot are washed and smeared afresh with turmeric and kunkuma. Incense and boiled rice are then offered as on other days, and the pot is taken in procession round the village. When this has been done, about midday, each householder brings his offering of boiled rice, cakes, fruits and flowers, and, in addition, the village as a whole contributes about two hundred or more seers of rice, which is boiled near the pandal. All these offerings are placed in a heap before the image. Then, first, a sheep or a buffalo is offered on behalf of the whole village. Having been duly washed, and smeared with turmeric and kunkuma, and decorated with margosa leaves, its head is cut off by a Mādigā. The blood is allowed to flow on the ground, and some loose earth is thrown upon it to cover it up. The head is offered to the image by the headman of the village. After this various householders, even Brāhmans and Bunniahs, bring animals for sacrifice. All are killed by a Mādigā, and then the heads are all presented and placed in a heap before the goddess. Sometimes an extraordinary number of animals is sacrificed on occasions of this kind, as many as a thousand sheep on a single day. In a village like Gudivada the number of victims is, of course, far less. The question of precedence in the offering of victims constantly gives rise to quarrels among the leading villagers. When I was once visiting Gudivada, there was a case pending before the *tahsildar*, *i.e.* the sub-divisional magistrate, between a *zamindar*, landowner, and a village *munsiff*, *i.e.* a village magistrate, about this knotty point. The heads are taken away by the pūjārīs, potters, washermen, barbers, Mālās and Mādigās, and others who take any official part in the sacrifice. The carcasses of the [691]

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order to get the rice and the buffalo's head. The idea of carrying the head and rice round a village, so the people said, is to draw a kind of cordon on every side of it and prevent the entrance of the evil spirits. Should any one in the town refuse to subscribe for the festival, his house is omitted from the procession, and left to the tender mercies of the devils. This procession is called *bali haranam*;[1] and in this district *inams*, rent-free lands, are held from Government by certain families of Mādigās for performing it. Besides the buffalo, large numbers of sheep and goats and fowls are sacrificed, each householder giving at least one animal. The head Mādigā who kills the animals takes the carcass and distributes the flesh among the members of his family. Often cases come into the courts to decide who has the right to kill them. As the sacrifice cannot wait for the tedious processes of the law, the elders of the village settle the question at once, pending an appeal to the courts. But in the town of Masulipatam, a Mādigā is specially licensed by the Municipality for the purpose, and all disputes are avoided.

Cocanada. At Cocanada there is only one Grāma-Devatā, Nukalamma (from Nuku, a Tamil word, meaning "to beat"); but she is very ill-tempered, they told me, and gives much trouble. Curiously enough, the present pūjārī is a woman of the fisherman caste. The office was hereditary in her family and she is the only surviving member of it. A male relative acts as deputy-pūjārī. Offerings are made to Nukalamma every day, doubtless on account of her temper. One custom I found observed here, which is not uncommon in these parts. When a victim's head has been cut off, it is put before the shrine and water poured on it. The offerer then waits to see whether the mouth opens. If it does, it is a sign that the sacrifice is accepted.[2] Another ceremony observed here is significant and, doubtless, a relic of the primitive idea

[1] Sanksrit for "presentation of the offering."
[2] See p. 55 n. 1, above.

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871 *Education.*—A day school has recently been started with 40 on the roll, 25 average attendance. Most of the pupils come from other [212] villages. Three adults are able to read the vernacular. Eight can write their signatures. The karnam alone can read and write well. About five or six have learned to read and write but have lost the [191] ability latterly. No one knows English.

There are about 50 or 60 books, all in Telugu. Of these about 214 seven or eight relate to the Hindu Law and to village administration. The rest relate to the Puranas.

624 *Village administration.*—There is no panchayat.

There is a monigar and a karnam and two talaiyaris. The karnam keeps the accounts of the village, and the monigar is the village magistrate and collects the kist. The talaiyaris are the servants attached to the village. There is no sanitary administration.

625 The nearest Police station is situated at a distance of 12 miles in Sodam, which station was formerly at Kandur.

In recent years there has been practically no crime. About five years ago there was a murder, never detected.

691 For the present there is only one case belonging to this village pending judgment at the Sessions Court, Chittoor. This is about a land dispute.

Ordinarily disputes are settled here in the presence of the monigar, karnam, and some leading men of the village.

178 *History and prospects.*—There has been economic deterioration due to the scarcity of rains and the consequent failure of crops. The ryots have been impoverished and consequently obliged to get into the clutches of creditors.

For the present there does not seem to be scope for economic improvement. The tanks are all getting silted up. The bunds are getting decreased in height. Recently one bund burst. The persons concerned are very poor to bear the cost of repairs. But if the repairs are executed then there might be some improvement and the area of irrigated lands might be extended.

437 More wells could be sunk with advantage. They are not sunk owing to lack of funds with the ryots. People sell land owing to the fact that by doing so only they can support their families and themselves. Land is bought by well-to-do persons as a sort of investment and also because it is sometimes had at a price lower than its right worth.

167 In recent years there has been no emigration at all. But about ten years ago two persons of Yekili caste emigrated to Natal. They have not since returned. Their emigration was due to their failure to get a living here.

Such movements have generally no visible effect on the life of the village.

325 Another interesting point is that smelting ovens are seen all round the village in a state of ruin. It seems that formerly (about thirty or forty years ago) iron ore found all round the village was smelted here locally, and that this was sufficient for the local demand. But now no such practice exists. However iron is still found in the shape of filings in large or small quantities round about. Moreover this iron is held to be of good quality. More detailed information can be had from the North Arcot District Manual, wherein it is mentioned.

271 rooms. The school buildings have been erected at the cost of the villagers. Efforts are being made to provide more accommodation. The school trains pupils for the Kanarese Lower Secondary Examination and instruction is given in Kanarese. Now efforts are being made to open classes in English and also to open a school exclusively for girls. There are about fifty boys in attendance and about fifty girls. School is held from 6-30 to 10-30 in the morning and from 2 to 6 in the evening. No time is allowed for play at all. Instruction is in Kanarese, although the language the people speak is Telugu.

[191] The number of persons who know how to read the vernacular is 131; fifteen or sixteen can read and write English.

[213] There are about thirty or forty books almost all in Sanskrit and Kanarese.

A night school has recently been opened. It has twenty on the rolls, mostly adults. Average attendance five.

623 *Village administration.*—There is a panchayat composed of five members. The main work of the panchayat lies in the field of village improvement in the different branches of education, sanitation, etc.

624 There is a patel and a shanbhog. The shanbhog's duty lies in keeping the village accounts. The patel is concerned with the general oversight of the village and the collection of revenue. There are four servants, two for police purposes and the two others concerned in the collection of revenue.

364 *Sanitary administration.*—The panchayat is concerned with the sanitary administration of the village. The panchayat holds meetings when occasion arises and takes steps to improve the sanitation of the village. Every Monday each family supplies half a day's labour, compoundable by a money payment of an anna. This does what is needful for the sanitation of the village. The panchayat exercises a general oversight in these matters. The Sanitary Inspector and the District Health and Sanitary Officer inspect the village often.

625 There is a police sub-station with a daffadar and five police constables. During nights, three other men watch the village; their services are purely voluntary and unpaid.

624 The higher authorities are the Amildar, Assistant Commissioner, and the Deputy Commissioner. The Amildar is the only official with whom there is contact at all often. The others visit the village about once or twice in a year. There is a resident shaikdar or revenue inspector.

674 *Crime.*—There have been practically no crimes punishable with capital punishment hitherto. Whatever crime there has been consists only of burglaries and minor thefts. These too are rare. For the past six years there has been only one burglary (in 1916); valuables were lost to the value of Rs. 150.

691 No villagers are engaged in litigation. Almost all civil disputes are decided in the village itself by the panchayat.

178 *History and prospects.*—There has been economic deterioration due to the scarcity of rains and the consequent failure of crops.
426 The ryots have been obliged to borrow and this is very well evidenced by the amount of rural indebtedness. No remission is

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796 from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150, largely spent on drink. The priests of the goddess are low caste people, chiefly the washerman caste. They get new cloths as presents. The whole celebration is barbarous and repulsive.

The village administration.—There is no panchayat in the village.
624 The village officers consist of a karnam, a munsif, and three servants. The karnam keeps the village accounts, while the munsif collects the revenue and attends to small criminal cases. The munsif does not generally care to try civil cases even within his province; they all go to the District Munsif's court.

364 Nobody attends to the village sanitation, though the munsif is expected to do so. The villagers too do not care to help him in his work. The Sanitary Inspector comes once in a year, and quietly goes away with satisfactory remarks from the easy chair in his note book. He being the one officer for two or three taluks, cannot pay much attention to one taluk in particular; besides he also has engineering work.

625 The police station is seven miles away. When crimes of extraordinary nature take place, the munsif reports the same to the police, who come and conduct enquiries. Most of the crimes are hushed up. Police enquiry is a sham. So is the night patrolling, which is the duty of the village servants.

692 The munsif is expected to hear petty crimes; but many cases
696 that might have been decided here go to the Magistrate's court. Many crimes have been left undetected, and the criminals unpunished, crimes which were horrible and plainly proved. As locally interpreted, the effect of the Evidence Act is such as to render the most proved case null and void for "want of proper evidence." When a murderer once escapes easily from punishment, another is at once encouraged. All the villagers know that it is these considerations that encouraged a man engaged in litigation to murder another who was about to give evidence against him. That case went unpunished. Such is the case with most murders. In fact, most men engaged in important litigation are afraid for their
674 lives in this village. In three years there have been four murders in the neighbourhood of the village, two killed in connection with litigation and two in connection with robbery from the person.

691 There is much litigation. About 45 cases are filed every year. Of these twenty to twenty-five will be for non-clearance of debts, and fifteen to twenty for land disputes. The villagers do not seem to show any hesitation or fear in resorting to the courts. The half educated Brahman in the village, acting as an agent for a vakil, with no other profession, tries to earn his livelihood by creating enmity and disputes among ignorant families and dragging them to the courts. Thus several families which were once considered very rich have been ruined. One family of Komatis, for example, with a property of about Rs. 20,000, was sued by some relations for a partition of the estate. The Vaisya refused all compromise in the earlier courts, pursued the case at enormous expense through the three courts, till he finally lost the whole estate in the High Court. In the end, the family of twelve children, with not an inch of land for support, and no means of liquidating the debts contracted for the court expenses, have sold their big house and gone away to the Agency tracts as beggars to fill their bellies. There are many families in the village similarly ruined.